

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's,
Warrington*



Like Jesus Christ, forced to flee.

Prayer for World Day
of Migrants and
Refugees, 2020

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

27th September 2020

Entrance Procession

Music: When I needed a neighbour – Sydney Carter

Pope Francis' Prayer for Migrants & Refugees

Father, you entrusted to St Joseph what you held most precious: the child Jesus and his Mother, in order to protect them from the dangers and threats of the wicked.

Grant that we may experience his protection and help. May he, who shared in the sufferings of those who flee from the hatred of the powerful, console and protect all our brothers and sisters driven by war, poverty and necessity to leave their homes and their lands to set out as refugees for safer places.

Help them, through the intercession of St Joseph, to find the strength to persevere, give them comfort in sorrows and courage amid their trials.

Grant to those who welcome them some of the tender love of this just and wise father, who loved Jesus as a true son and sustained Mary at every step of the way.

May he, who earned his bread by the work of his hands, watch over those who have seen everything in life taken away and obtain for them the dignity of a job and the serenity of a home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, whom St Joseph saved by fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whom he loved as a faithful husband in accordance with your will. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

(Ezekiel 18: 25-28)

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: 'You object, "What the Lord does is unjust." Listen, you House of Israel: is what I do unjust? Is it not what you do that is unjust? When the upright man renounces his integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself has committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, he deserves to live. He has chosen to

renounce all his previous sins; he shall certainly live; he shall not die.'

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

- 1 Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my saviour.
- 2 Remember that your compassion, O Lord, and your love are from of old. The sins of my youth and my frailties remember not; in your kindness remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation (Lourdes)

Gospel

(Matthew 21: 28-32)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Bidding Prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Music: Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ – J S Bach

Prayer over the Offerings

O Lord,
who willed that your Son should lay down his life to gather into one your scattered children, grant that this sacrifice of your peace may bring about a communion of minds and hearts and an increase in fraternal charity.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Eucharistic Acclamations

Sanctus En Fa Majeur – Lourdes

The Mystery of Faith

**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

Communion Rite

Music: The Servant King- Graham Kendrick

Prayer after Communion

O Lord, who have renewed us
with the one Bread and the one Chalice,
grant that in sincerity of heart
we may show true compassion
toward strangers and the abandoned
and that all of us may deserve
to be gathered together at last
in the land of the living.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

Distribution of Communion

Music: Taste and see – James Moore

Acknowledgements

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Reflection on the Gospel

By Ged Edwards

***CAFOD's Community Participation Officer
working in Liverpool***

In this Sunday's Gospel we find Jesus again in conflict with the religious authorities, the scribes and pharisees. They had defined how people were acceptable to God which is of course helpful. The trouble was that many people in Israel could never fit the bill. These were the people the authorities called "the sinners" and "the poor". So, because they were excluded from mainstream society, it was these people who had left it, and flocked to John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Through John, they found their dignity. They discovered that God loved and wanted them to behave as his children. But when John challenged the authorities on this, they had him killed. Jesus knew all of this first-hand. He had also travelled the road from Nazareth to see John at the Jordan. When he got there, he met people, the poor and sinners of course in huge numbers. And he realised the truth that the people excluded by the authorities were just normal people, but people who had been treated badly by the system and for whom within it there was no hope.

The great theologian, Albert Nolan, in his book 'Jesus Before Christianity', writes that you can tell what sort of person someone is by the decisions they make. John and his disciples stayed at the Jordan baptising people but Jesus chose a different path. He went back into society to try and bring it together. I like to think that he did this because he had seen that people were prevented from being together, lied to and falsely separated, often through no fault of their own. And yet, all the time that God loved them and the whole of Israel, not just the few. He saw just how much of a mistake this separation was. Jesus had found his mission. This is what is behind this meeting for Jesus in the Gospel today and his repeating John's question, "What do you think?" When they reply, he points out the simple facts: that even those they despised most have actually bypassed the system and found themselves as members of God's family. They had listened to John and found a way to God, simply by admitting their errors, seeking forgiveness and doing what God wants them to do. Meanwhile, the scribes and pharisees say they will follow God, but they don't. So, they are actually excluding themselves from God and his Kingdom, and preventing people from being with God, depriving them of even their dignity.

So, to us, today. This story builds on the Gospel story last week about the labourers in the vineyard which reminded us that our lives are about doing our bit in the work of building the Kingdom. This means getting up every day and playing our part when we are called to.

We are in the period called Creation Time when Pope Francis has asked us to reflect on the gift of the earth, and yet how its people and creatures, in all their beauty and mistakes are so often mistreated by economic and religious systems, with all their winners and losers. And we remind ourselves that Jesus' mission, our mission, is that, as St John reminds us, "they might have life and have it to the full." Sometimes we say we will do the right thing, to help God build the Kingdom, and then make no plans to do it. Or perhaps today, like the second son, like the tax collectors and prostitutes, like those who have changed their minds because they see differently, we get stuck in too? We can make choices which mean we "hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor," as Pope Francis puts it in *Laudato Si'*.

So, will you use the car when you could walk? Do we support CAFOD's appeals and campaigns on climate change? Each of us has such choices today. Let's pray for and encourage each other along the way. It will not be easy to make the radical changes that are needed. Like Jesus, we will be challenging the prevailing way of doing things if we build a different future. But, like the son who did not want to go to the vineyard, we can change. And we need one another - no-one can cultivate a vineyard alone. We can work together to make something better and be proud to share and to hand on to future generations. Let's start back today.